



## SARC Coordinator's Survey Yields Interesting Results

In March 2006, the California Department of Education (CDE) launched a Web-based survey that asked School Accountability Report Card (SARC) coordinators who work in local educational agencies and schools to respond to a series of questions about their experience with preparing and publishing school report cards.

The CDE appreciates the willingness of SARC coordinators to participate in this important survey and to share their thoughts and ideas. The results of the survey will assist the CDE as it continues to evaluate and improve the SARC program.

Highlights of the survey results include the following:

- Most of the respondents (82.1%) indicated that report cards are usually posted on the Internet between January and June.
- Presuming that the CDE could make the data available by the end of September, the most popular suggestions for a common statewide deadline for the posting of completed report cards were the end of November (21.8%), December (21.5%), and January (21.5%).
- Many but not a majority of the respondents (46.0%) indicated that the CDE template is used as the format for the completed report card.
- The report card topics that most frequently are the subject of inquiries include (% of respondents selecting each topic noted):
  - Test results (57.6%)
  - Academic Performance Index, Adequate Yearly Progress, and Program Improvement (50.7%)
  - School site mission, demographics, parental involvement, class size, instructional time, etc. (26.6%)
  - Safety, discipline, and expulsion/suspension data (18.8%)
  - Staff qualifications and availability (14.6%)
- The report card topics that least frequently are the subject of inquiries include (% of respondents selecting each topic noted):
  - School repair status or facilities (67.5%)
  - College preparation (60.9%)

- High school completion (57.6%)
  - Teacher salaries and expenditures per student (57.0%)
  - Program availability (56.7%)
- Less than one-quarter of the respondents (22.4%) indicated that they currently produce a shorter version of the SARC (that summarizes some information and does not include other elements). In addition, less than one-third of the respondents (30.1%) indicated that it is likely or very likely that their organization would use a short, summary SARC template if the CDE provided one as a courtesy, assuming that the full SARC would still be required.
- The biggest SARC preparation challenges are (% of respondents selecting each topic noted):
  - Allocating staff resources and/or competing time demands for staff (63.9%)
  - Too few requests and/or too little parental use to justify the resources expended to prepare the SARC (63.9%)
  - Changing requirements from year to year (55.8%)
  - Mid-year changes to requirements (46.6%)
  - Difficult or time consuming to obtain all required information (41.2%)
- When asked what concerns about the SARC have been heard from parents, all the

respondents (100%) reported that they have been told that the report card is too long and complex, and that the report card is unattractive to parents.

We plan in the near future to post a summary of the SARC survey results on the SARC Web page. For further information about the survey, please contact us indicated at the end of this newsletter.

### Updates on Pending Legislation Affecting the SARC

- [Senate Bill 1510 \(Alquist\)](#), as introduced on February 23, 2006 – This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to the law that directs the CDE to develop a SARC template and recommend its adoption by the SBE. The bill is sponsored by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as a legislative “vehicle” for enacting a number of SARC improvements.

In particular, the following SARC elements are expected to be proposed for repeal in SB 1510:

- Local assessment results [(*Education Code* Section 33126(b)(1)(B))]
- Percentage of pupils in kindergarten through grade 3 that are participating in the Class Size Reduction Program (a portion of *Education Code* Section 33126(b)(4))]

- Total number of instructional minutes offered at the school compared to the total number of instructional minutes required by state law [*Education Code* Section 33126(b)(15)]
  - Total number of minimum days in the school year [*Education Code* Section 33126(b)(16)]
  - Whether the school qualified for the Immediate Intervention Underperforming Schools Program and whether the school applied for and received a grant pursuant to the program [*Education Code* Section 33126(b)(19)]
  - Whether the school qualifies for the Governor's Performance Award Program [*Education Code* Section 33126(b)(20)]
  - Teacher and administrative salary and pupil expenditure information at the district level compared to the state average for the same type of district (*Education Code* Section 41409.3)
- [Assembly Bill 1837 \(Daucher\)](#), as amended on April 5, 2006 —This bill, an urgency measure that would take immediate effect, would require the CDE, by January 1, 2007, to recommend for SBE adoption a SARC template revision that would include several new data fields for reporting school budgetary information. The bill is sponsored by the Governor's Office of the Secretary for Education. AB 1837 is currently awaiting action in the Assembly Education Committee.
  - [Assembly Bill 1917 \(DeVore\)](#), as amended on March 20, 2006 — This bill would require school district governing boards to compile a yearly report containing a variety of school employee salary and benefit cost information, and to include this information in annual school report cards. The bill is sponsored by the author. AB 1917 is currently awaiting action in the Assembly Education Committee.

If you have questions or comments about the topics covered in this newsletter, or suggestions for topics for a future newsletter, please contact us as indicated below.

In addition, SB 1510 is expected to provide for a date by which all school report cards must be published each year. SB 1510 is currently awaiting action in the Senate Rules Committee.

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